

I recently received a [letter](#) from Interior Secretary Salazar, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, EPA Administrator Jackson, and Chairwoman Sutley of the Council on Environmental Quality, seeking input on “how to best support local community efforts to conserve outdoor spaces” as part of its “America’s Great Outdoors Initiative.”

While I agree that the federal government should take practical measures to ensure that our public lands and resources are conserved for the benefit of future generations, it is equally important that those goals are achieved without federal regulations and mandates that restrict access and multiple-use of our federal lands. Environmental protection and multiple-use of public land does not need to be mutually exclusive. Through policies that are flexible and locally oriented we can allow American to enjoy full access to our federal lands for a variety of sustainable and economically beneficial purposes, including recreation, ranching, grazing, mining and timber harvests.

For that reason, I welcome the Administration’s outreach as it conducts listening sessions across the country and develops its “conservation agenda for the 21st century.” At the same time, this Administration has already shown itself to be increasingly opposed to multiple-use and I share in the strong concerns that this initiative will be used as a tool to further lock-up federal lands from the American public. I will continue to closely monitor this issue and will be sure to stand strongly against any policy or proposal that violates the important principles outlined above. I would also encourage you to submit your own thoughts and opinions on how the Administration should approach a conservation strategy on our federal lands. For more information and to submit comments, please visit the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative website at: <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/> .